

# Foster Parents

Changing Lives One Child at a Time

August 2006



## Camp to Belong

Kids who come into foster care sometimes lose touch with some of the most important people in their lives – their brothers and sisters. To help them re-connect, a national organization has formed that brings separated siblings together for a few days at a summer camp. We are fortunate to now have this camp in the northwest. *Camp to Belong* has all the normal summer camp activities, but also has a focus on building relationships.

Due to the incredible teamwork of state staff in Washington, foster parents and our counterparts in Oregon, we were able to quickly organize and send 13 kids to Lake Coeur d'Alene for six days. Another 4 kids from Washington were also able to participate thanks to Youth for Christ in Tacoma.

Sandy Kirk, Colville DCFS office, helped send eight kids to *Camp to Belong*. Sandy talked to two of three girls in one family she helped attend. The girls were excited about the trip and gave her this feedback:

“Comments from the 17 year old were way cool, made you feel welcome, everyone got along, and got to share their feelings, camp counselors had been foster children too. The 17 year old told of sharing feelings, crying, and the counselor crying also. She said the founder was there and told them she was separated from her sister for 18 years. The 10 year old loved it too. She liked the rafting but said she didn't get to go horseback riding. They said they went on a houseboat cruise and had a carnival, BBQ's, obstacle course and camp fires. They had a birthday party for all of them because they miss each others birthday. The same sex siblings were in the same cabin and got to spend lots of time with each other. It was clear to me that both of these girls loved the camp and when asked if they would go back again it was an overwhelming yes”

Our goal for next year is to be able to send more kids to this remarkable camp.

## Foster Parent and Caregiver Conference

*Watch your mailbox!* Information will be coming to you soon about registration, scholarships and other activities for the Foster Parent and Caregiver Conference to be held in Spokane Sept. 17-19. We are planning for a great conference again this year. If you are interested, submit your application and scholarship request quickly as scholarships are limited. We hope to see you at the Conference in September!

## Chickenpox: New Requirements

Because chickenpox spreads easily and can be a serious illness at any age, children in Washington are now required to be immunized against chickenpox (varicella) before entering child care and school. The new requirement, which went into effect July 1, means kids entering kindergarten and sixth grade must get the chickenpox vaccine or document that they've had the disease. Children from 19 months to kindergarten-age who attend licensed child care or preschool must also be vaccinated. To get more information on all childhood immunizations you can go to the Department of Health Immunization Program Web site at [www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/Immunize](http://www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/Immunize) or talk to your child's primary care provider.

## Confidentiality of Foster Parent Information

Children's Administration does not release your name or address to the Foster Parent Association of Washington State (FPWS), local foster parent associations, YMCA of Greater Seattle, or to Families for Kids (FFK). These agencies can provide support, information and referral, and key information to assist you in providing for the children in your care. We encourage you to contact each of these agencies and provide them with your information so that they can add you to their email and mailing list and you can then receive important information. Contact information for these agencies is:

Foster Parent Association of Washington State: [www.fpaws.org](http://www.fpaws.org) or 1-800-391-CARE (2273)

Families for Kids (FFK): [www.familiesforkids.org](http://www.familiesforkids.org) or 1-888-794-1794

YMCA of Greater Seattle: [whyfoster@seattlemca.org](mailto:whyfoster@seattlemca.org) or 1-800-760-5340

Foster Care Resource Network (Bremerton and Tacoma caregivers): 1-253-677-8122

## Important Numbers

### **Important numbers to know when you take care of children in foster care or are thinking about doing so:**

Statewide information about becoming a foster or adoptive parent: *Why Foster* statewide telephone line at 1-800-760-5340 or [whyfoster@seattlemca.org](mailto:whyfoster@seattlemca.org) Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. or leave a message and receive a return call within 24 hours.

Statewide information about receiving foster parent support: *Families for Kids*: 1-888-794-1794 or [www.familiesforkids.org](http://www.familiesforkids.org) Monday – Friday, 9:00 – 5:00 p.m. or leave a message. Receive a return call by the next business day.

Kitsap and Pierce County information about becoming a foster parent or to receive foster parent support: *Foster Care Resource Network*, 1-253-677-8122. Monday – Friday, 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. or leave a message and receive a return call by the next business day.

General foster parent information for the state of Washington/FPAWS: *Foster Parent Association of Washington State*, 1-800-391-CARE (2273) or [www.fpaws.org](http://www.fpaws.org). FPAWS is seeking new members and supporting foster parents in many ways, including referrals to local associations.

Support for foster parents under investigation for allegations of abuse or neglect: *Foster Parent Investigation Retention Support Team* (FIRST) 1-253-219-6782, Monday – Saturday, 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m., or leave a message and receive a return call within 24 hours.

CA Foster Parent and Caregiver Crisis Line and general support on licensing and case management questions not abuse or neglect: *Caregiver Support/Crisis Line*: 1-800-301-1868. Weeknights from 4:30 p.m. – 8:00 a.m./weekends and holidays, 24 hours per day.

*Family Help Line*: 1-800-932-HOPE or [www.parenttrust.org](http://www.parenttrust.org). The Family Help Line is a free, statewide training and referral line for the families of Washington State. Last year, the Family Help Line received over 5,000 calls and requests for information. Calls can last up to 90 minutes and parents can call as often as needed.

### **Children's Administration Foster Parent Website and Foster Parent Training Website**

For information about Foster Parenting: <http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/ca/fosterparents/>

For information about Foster Parent Training: <http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/ca/fosterparents/training.asp>

Join the 400 people who have subscribed to the List Serve:(r) <http://listserv.wa.gov/cgi-bin/wa?SUBED1=fosterparents&&A=1>

**Washington State Mental Health Crisis Line:** Crisis intervention is provided for mental health issues. Go to <http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/mentalhealth/> to find the nearest telephone number for the crisis line.